

**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CHAETODONTID
FORAGING PATTERNS**

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Purpose: Obtain quantitative behavioral, distribution, and feeding data for some chaetodontid and pomacanthid fishes as part of a larger comparative study of the niche dimensions and overlap among species in these families between relatively comparable reef communities in the Caribbean and Indo-West Pacific.

Participants: University of Guam—Charles Birkeland, Principal Investigator, and Steve Neudecker

Accomplishments: A microscopic examination of the stomach contents of fishes was done to provide verification of the field observations on foraging behavior. Individual fish were observed for 5-minute intervals to obtain samples of feeding habits. Several individuals, each of *Chaetodon capistratus* and *Prognathodes aculeatus*, were observed near the transects at 15.2- and 30.5 m (50- and 100-ft) depths along the east and west canyon walls during both morning and late afternoon. It was found that, despite traditional conceptions of fish feeding patterns in the Caribbean, one of the species studied fed predominantly on scleractinian corals.